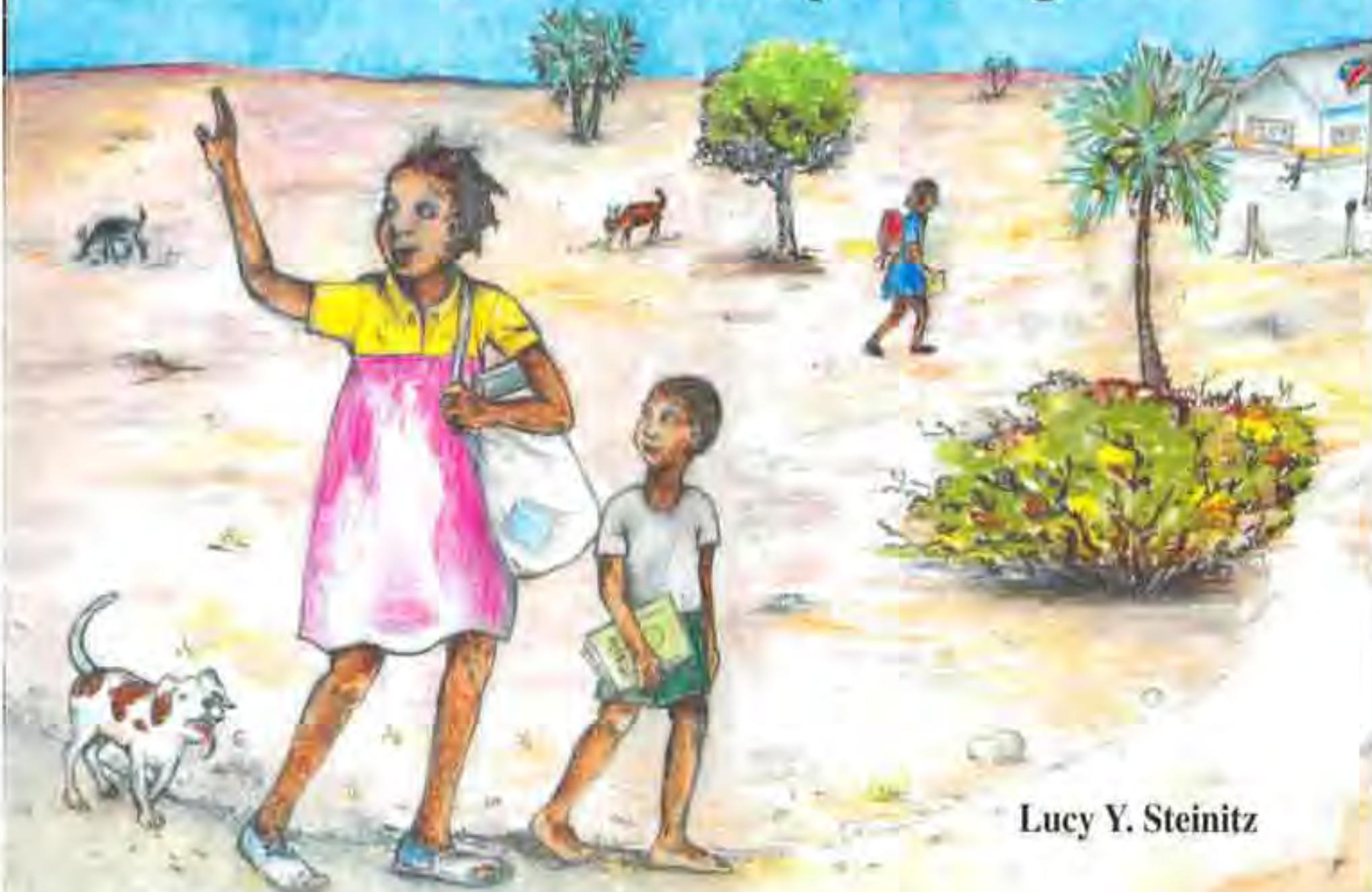


Kauna's Birthday Wish

Kauna se verjaarsdagwens



Lucy Y. Steinitz

About the author

Lucy Y. Steinitz, PhD, is the co-founder and National Co-ordinator of Catholic AIDS Action in Namibia. She is also co-founder and Board Chairperson of CAFO: Namibia's Church Alliance for Orphans. Her career as a social worker began in 1972, initially with the frail elderly. Lucy Y. Steinitz has authored numerous publications, although this is the first one for children.

Oor die skrywer

Lucy Y. Steinitz, PhD, is die medestigter en Nasionale koördineerder van Catholic AIDS Action in Namibië. Sy is ook medestigter en Vorsitter van die Raad van CAFO: Namibië se Kerkalliansie vir weeskinders. Haar loopbaan as welsynwerkster strek vanaf 1972, aanvanklik met verswakte bejaardes. Lucy Y. Steinitz is die skrywer van verskeie publikasies, hoewel hierdie haar eerste werk vir kinders is.

About the illustrator

Valence Litja Williams was born in 1978 in Ondangwa, Namibia. He is a final year student at the Windhoek College of Education, majoring in art. Valence is also the author and illustrator of a collection of short stories entitled *Every adult was once a child too*, (Out of Africa Publishers, forthcoming).

Oor die illustreerder

Valence Litja Williams is in 1978 op Ondangwa in Namibië gebore. Hy is 'n finale-jaar student aan die Windhoekse Onderwyskollege, met kuns as hoofvak. Valence is ook die skrywer en illustreerder van 'n versameling kortverhale met die titel: *Every adult was once a child too* (Out of Africa Publishers, toekomstig).

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by Lucy Y. Steinitz

illustrated by Valence Litja Williams

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"For all the children of Namibia"

Kauna woke up with a heavy heart. It was her birthday today, but she did not feel at all happy. In one week, it would be the beginning of the school year, and Kauna's grandmother had told her that she could not go back to school.

A few days earlier, Kauna's grandmother had called her as she was stirring the pot over the small cooking fire. "Kauna, dear," Kuku had said, "I have some bad news for you. Sit down next to me, little one."

Kauna word wakker met 'n swaar hart. Dis vandag baar verjaarsdag, maar sy voel glad nie gelukkig nie. Oor 'n week begin die nuwe skooljaar en Kauna se ouma het gesê sy kan nie teruggaan skool toe nie.

'n Paar dae vantevore het Kauna se ouma haar geroep terwyl sy die pot oor die klein kookvuur geroer het. "Kauna, my skat," het sy gesê, "Ek het slegte nuus vir jou. Kom sit bier langs my, kleintjie."



And then her granny told her that she did not have the money for Kauna to go back to school. "You have been at school for three years already," Kuku told her. "You can read and write. Now it is time for your little brother to go. I am sorry, but I don't have the money for both of you. You know, Kauna, that I have been trying to save for your school funds for a long time.

"But ever since your parents died, it has been a struggle for me just to feed you and your two younger brothers. We used up all our money caring for your parents when they were sick, and then paying for their funerals. And when our storage hut burned down last winter, I needed to use the last of my savings for that."

En toe vertel haar ouma daar sy het nie die geld om vir Kauna te betaal om weer skool toe te gaan nie. "Jy het al vir drie jaar skool bygewoon," het Kuku gesê. "Jy kan lees en skryf. Dis nou jou kleinbroet se beurt om te gaan. Ek is jammer, maar ek kan nie vir julle albei betaal nie. Jy weet, Kauna, ek probeer al lankal genoeg spaar vir jou skoolgeld."

"Maar vandat jou ouers dood is, het ek gesukkel net om genoeg kos vir jou en jou twee jonger broers te bekostig. Ons het al ons geld opgebruik toe ons jou ouers versorg het terwyl hulle siek was. En daarna moes ons nog vir die begrafnisse ook betaal. Toe ons stoerbut verlede winter afgebrand het, het dit die laaste van my spaargeld ingesluk."



A big fat tear rolled down Kauna's cheek. She loved school, and longed to go back. She knew she was not perhaps the cleverest in the class, but she enjoyed the lessons so much. She prayed silently that she would get help from somewhere.

Now today it was Kauna's birthday, and her greatest birthday wish in the entire world was to go back to school.

Kuku saw Kauna's sadness. "Are you still sad about the school?" she asked her quietly. Kauna just nodded silently.

'n Groot, vet traan rol teen Katina se wang af. Sy is baie lief vir die skool, en wil so graag teruggaan. Sy weet sy is dalk nie die slimste in haar klas nie, maar sy geniet elke oomblik van die lesse. Sy bid stilletjies dat hulp van iewers sal opdaag.

Nou is dit vandag Kauna se verjaarsdag, en haar grootste verjaarsdagwens in die hele wêreld is om te kan teruggaan skool toe.

Kuku sien hoe ongelukkig Kauna is. "Treur jy nog altyd oor die skool?" vra sy haar saggies. Kauna knik stil.



Kauna wondered what she and her grandmother could do. They had no money left. All the grandmother had was a few goats and a couple of chickens – not enough to sell. This was the worst birthday she had ever had! It was even worse than the last one when both her mother and father were very sick and nobody remembered her birthday.

Later that day, Kauna's grandmother called out to her. "Come, Kauna. Let us go to the church in the village. Maybe that will make you feel better."

As they entered the church, they saw Pastor Joseph. He greeted Kuku warmly, and then looked at Kauna. "Why do you look so sad today?" Pastor Joseph asked.

Kauna wonder watter plan sy en haar ouma kan maak. Hulle het geen geld oor nie. Al wat baar ouma het is 'n paar bokke en 'n handjievol boenders – nie genoeg om te verkoop nie. Dis die onaangenaamste verjaarsdag wat sy nog ooit gehad het! Dis selfs erger as baar vorige verjaarsdag toe beide haar ma en pa so siek was en niemand eers die geleentheid onthou het nie.

Later daardie dag roep Kauna se ouma na baar. "Kom, Kauna. Kom ons gaan kerk toe in die dorp. Dalk laat dit ons beter voel."

Toe bulle die kerk binnegaan, sien bulle vir Pastoor Josef. Hy groet vir Kuku vriendelik, en kyk dan na Kauna. "Waarom lyk jy so ongelukkig vandag?" wil hy weet.



"Oh Pastor!" Kauna burst out. "All the other children are going to school! I want to go, too. But we don't have any money to pay for me to go!"

Pastor Joseph sat down, and pulled Kauna closer to him. "This is indeed a very serious situation, Kauna," he said gently. "But we are very lucky to be living in Namibia where our government guarantees that ALL children can go to school even if they do not have money for funds or a school uniform."

Looking up at Kuku, he added, "Our Constitution says that all Namibian children have the right to a free primary education. What this means is that the government will provide education to all children, but families in this country must also work very hard to try and pay something to the school to help out – saving up their money each year, like you tried to do. But if there are TRULY NEEDY CHILDREN whose families cannot pay the school funds, then there is another way."

"At, Pastoor!" bars dit uit Kauna. "Al die kinders gaan skool toe! Ek wil ook gaan, maar ons het nie geld om vir my te betaal nie!"

Pastoor Josef gaan sit en trek Kauna nader. "Dis nou werklik 'n ernstige saak, Kauna," sê hy simpatiek. "Ons is baie gelukkig om in Namibië te woon waar ons regering onderwys vir alle kinders verskaf, maar gesinne in bierdie land moet ook baie hard werk om self iets by te dra om te help – hulle moet byvoorbeeld elke jaar hulle geld spaar, soos julle probeer doen het. Maar as daar WERKLIK BEHOEFTIGE KINDERS is wie se gesinne nie die skoolgeld kan betaal nie, is daar tog 'n uitweg."



Pastor Joseph paused. He saw that Kuku and Kauna were listening very carefully to what he was saying. Then he continued. "The first thing you must do is go to the principal or to the members of the School Board and explain your situation. Sometimes, that is enough for an exemption, which means that the child is allowed to go to school without paying the school funds, or just paying a small amount.

"Other times, the principal or the school board may ask for a report by a social worker or another respected community leader. Then you have to go and ask that person to make a visit to your home to see how you and your family is managing. After the visit, this person must write up a report or letter with true facts about the situation and give it to the school. Then the child can go to school without paying the funds, or by just paying a part of them."

*Pastoor Josef sien dat Kauna en Kuku baie aandagtig na hom luister. Hy gaan voort.
"Heel eerste moet julle na die prinsipaal en die skoolraad gaan en die saak aan hulle verduidelik. Soms is dit genoeg om vrystelling te kry, wat beteken die kind mag skool bywoon sonder om die skoolgeld te betaal, of deur slegs 'n klein bedrag te betaal.*

"Die prinsipaal of die skoolraad mag egter besluit om 'n verslag van 'n welsywerker of 'n ander gerespekteerde gemeenskapsleier aan te vra. Dan moet julle daardie persoon gaan vra om julle huis te besoek om self te sien hoe jy en jou gesin lewe. Na die besoek moet hierdie persoon 'n verslag of brief skryf met ware feite oor die situasie en dit aan die skool oorhandig. Dan kan die kind skool toe gaan sonder om die skoolgeld te betaal, of deur slegs 'n deel te betaal."



Kauna smiled. She didn't understand everything the good pastor said, but she knew he was trying to help. And he said something about how, in Namibia, the government made sure that all children could go to school, even if they were very, very poor. That meant that she still had a chance!

Kauna glimlag. Sy verstaan nie alles wat die goeie pastoor gesê het nie, maar sy weet hy probeer help. En hy het iets gesê van hoe, in Namibië, die regering seker maak dat alle kinders skool toe kan gaan, selfs al is hulle baie, baie arm. Dit beteken sy het nog altyd 'n kans!



The next day, Kauna woke up early. She called for a neighbour to watch her little brothers, and set off with her grandmother to the school. Kauna's dog, Bo wagged his tail and barked as they walked away. "Bo is wishing us good luck," Kauna thought to herself. "I hope he is right!"

Pastor Joseph met Kuku and Kanna near the school building. Together they went inside to find Mr. Ipinge, the principal. While Kauna waited outside the office door, Kuku and Pastor Joseph explained why Kuku didn't have enough money for the school funds.

"Die volgende dag is Kauna vroeg wakker. Sy vra 'n buurvrou om na haar twee boeties om te sien, en stap saam met haar ouma na die skool. Kauna se bond, Bo, waaf sy stert en blaas as bulle wegstap. "Bo wens ons voorspoed," dink Kauna. "Ek hoop dit word bewaarbeid."

Pastoor Josef ontmoet vir Kuku en Kanna naby die skoolgebou. Hulle stap saam na binne en klop aan by Mntr Ipinge, die prinsipaal, se kantoor. Terwyl Kauna buite wag, verduidelik Kuku en Pastoor Josef waarom Kuku nie genoeg geld het om die skoolgeld te betaal nie.



Mr. Ipinge listened carefully. Then he said, "School funds are very important for this school. We use them to pay for books and other things that our learners use. If everyone said that they could not pay for the school funds, then our children would not have all the supplies they need."

Kauna had her ear to the door so she could hear what was being said. She held her breath, and tried to catch every word. Mr. Ipinge, the principal, continued: "But I know you, Kuku, from our village. You are working very hard to feed your family, and this is very difficult for you. I remember when your storage hut burned down last winter. Luckily for you, our School Board is having a meeting today. I will discuss this with the Board and come back to you with our decision."

Mnr Ipinge luister aandagtig. Dan sê hy: "Skoolgeld is vir bierdie skool baie belangrik. Ons gebruik die geld om te betaal vir boeke en ander leermiddels wat ons onderwysers benodig. Indien almal sê hulle kan nie skoolgeld betaal nie, sal ons leerlinge nie die voorrade bê wat hulle nodig kry nie."

Kauna staan met haar oor styf teen die deur gedruk en hoor alles wat gesê word. Sy hou haar asem op en probeer geen woord mis nie. Mnr Ipinge, die prinsipaal, gaan voort: "Maar ek ken jou, Kuku, van ons dorp. Jy werk baie hard om jou gesin te versorg, en dit is vir jou baie moeilik. Ek ontbou dat jou stoorbuit verlede winter afgebrand het. Gelukkig vergader ons skoolraad vandag. Ek sal die saak met die raad bespreek en jou van die besluit in kennis stel."



Kauna and Kuku prayed a while, and then left for home. Kauna was so anxious, her heart hurt. Later that day, she saw Pastor Joseph coming towards her home.

He greeted Kauna and smiled. "The Board heard your story and understand that you cannot pay the school funds. We decided that you can just pay us what you can, when you can. Next week you can start Grade 4," he continued. "But you must study very hard...Who knows?" he added, winking at Kauna. "One day, you could grow up to become principal of this school, or maybe even the President of Namibia!"

Kauna's birthday wish had come true!

Kauna en Kuku het saam gebid en toe huis toe gestap. Kauna was so gespanne dit het gevoel asof haar hart pyn. Later daardie dag sien sy Pastoor Josef op pad na hulle huis.

Hy groet vir Kauna en glimlag. "Die raad het jou verbaal geboor en verstaan waarom jy nie skoolgeld kan betaal nie. Ons het besluit jy kan betaal soveel jy kan, wanneer jy kan. Volgende week begin jy in Graad 4." Hy klop haar tiggies op die skouer en gaan dan voort: "Maar jy moet baie hard leer...wie weet?" Hy knipoog vir Kauna, en sê dan, "Dalk word jy eendag, wanneer jy groot is, die prinsipaal van bierdie skool, of selfs die President van Namibië!"

Kauna se verjaarsdagwens is bewaarbeid!



Note to guardians, parents and other adult readers:

Almost 100 000 children have been orphaned by the AIDS pandemic by 2003. Having already suffered the trauma of losing one or both parents, these orphans often suffer yet another loss: their education. This is especially the case among girl children, or when they have to make way for a younger sibling to go to school. Studies have shown that it is very difficult to get children back into school once they have dropped out.

Namibia was the first African country to complete a Plan of Action for Children and to ratify the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Article 28 of the Constitution of the Republic of Namibia also says that all children shall have the right to basic education, free of charge.

Not many guardians know this. Poverty sometimes forces them to keep the children in their care out of school, usually because they cannot pay the school development funds (known also as "school fees").

The Ministry of Basic Education, Sport and Culture has issued policy guidelines on exempting needy children from paying school development funds. In terms of Education Act, 16 of 2001, School Boards may set up a School Development Fund, and may collect money from parents to cover expenses that are not covered by the Ministry. These funds are additional to what the school receives from government, and contributing towards the fund should never be used to keep children out of school. School Boards should have guidelines on how to exempt children who cannot pay, or children who cannot pay the whole amount, from paying. No School Board may force a parent to pay an amount to register the child, nor may the Board withhold school reports of children who haven't paid.

However, the guardian or parents must show that they do not have the money to pay. The guardian can do this by approaching the School Board, or else the school principal directly, as early as possible before the school year starts. An explanation must be given as to why it is not possible to pay the (full amount of the) school development funds. If there are supporting documents – death certificates, a letter of support from a councillor, traditional leader, church leader, or from a trained community-based volunteer (such as a volunteer of Catholic AIDS Action) – this would be helpful. As in Kaura's story, the School Board makes the determination on each child or family separately. The principal or School Board can also request a written report by a social worker in order to confirm the child's home situation.

Any child living in extreme poverty can be exempted from paying school funds. Although Kaura's story is about an orphan, there are many other vulnerable children in Namibia who are suffering similar economic conditions, and cannot pay school development funds. These children may also be exempted.

In addition, no child may be excluded from school or discriminated against IN ANY WAY because he or she does not have a school uniform. Appeals may be directed to the regional office of the Ministry of Basic Education, Sport, and Culture.

For information on how you can reach your nearest social worker, please contact the Ministry of Health and Social Services (Directorate of Social Developmental Welfare Services). Children in need may also be exempted from paying hostel funds. For information on the reduction or elimination of hostel funds, contact the regional Superintendent, Ministry of Basic Education, Sport and Culture.

For more information, you can also contact:

Catholic AIDS Action, PO Box 11525, Windhoek, Namibia.
Tel: 061-276 350 Fax: 061-276 364.

Vir die aandag van voogde, ouers en ander volwasse lesers:

Bynaas 100 000 kinders is gedurende 2003 ouerloos gelaat as gevolg van die Vigs-pandemie. Hierdie kinders ly diewelsaars die traumae om hul eie ma en pa te versig, net om hulle dan aan die dood af te staan, waarna hulle 'n verdere verlies ly, naamlik hulle opvoeding. Oft is vrees die gevial met meeslae, wat ook dikwels moet plek maak vir 'n jonger broer of suster om skool toe te gaan. Nyortsing het getoon dat dit uiters moeilik is om kinders terug op die skoolbane te kry nadat hulle sensasional skool vertrek het.

Namibie was die eerste Africanaand om 'n Akte van Voorde vir Kinders op te stel in om die Konvensie van die Regte van die Kind te ontherset. Artikel 20 van die Grondwet van die Republiek van Namibië seek dat alle kinders geregtig is op gratis basiese onderwyss.

Dit is iets waarvan min voogde bewus is. Armoede dwing hulle om vir die kinders in huis sorg uit die skool te hou. gewoonlik omdat hulle nie die skool ontwikkelingsfondse (ook bekend as "skoolgeld") kan betaal nie.

Die Ministerie van Basiese Onderwyss, Sport en Kultuur het belangriklike uitgereik tot opsigte van die kwytsekeling van behoeftige kinders vir die betaal van skoolontwikkelingsfondse. Ingelyke die Onderwysswet, 16 van 2001, mag sepolende 'n skoolontwikkelingsfondse in die nuwe roep en geld van ouers inwoede om uitgawes te dek wat nie deur die Ministerie gedek word nie. Hierdie fondse is bykomend tot geld wat die skool van die regering ontvang, en bydra tot die fonds behoefde hoof as rede gebruik te word om kinders uit die skool te hou nie. Skoolrake beperk daar egelyke to beskik vir die kwytsekeling van kinders wat nie in die skoolfonds kan bydra nie, of wat net 'n gedeelte van die bedrag kan betaal. Geen skoolrake mag 'n ouer dwing om 'n bading te betaal om 'n kind te registreer nie, soos mag ook nie die skoolsoort laugheus wat 'n kind vir so ouers nie betaal het nie.

Die voog of ouer moet egter bewys dat hy/hulle nie oor die geld beskik om te betaal nie. Dit kan gedoen word deur die primaat of die koopraad so vroeg moontlik, voor die begin van die nuwe skooljaar te ruil, 'n Verduideliking moet verskaf word vir wanneer die (volle) bedrag van die skoolfonds behop nie betaal kan word nie. Dokumentasie - doodsensitkate, 'n onderskeiwergestalte van 'n landstryd-traumonele test, kerkenoor of van 'n opgeleide gemeenskapsgespane en vrywillige werker (soos 'n vrywillige werker by Catholic AIDS Action) sal waardelik werk. Soos in KwaZulu-Natal, besig die skoolraad absolutek vir elke gevval. Die primaat of skoolraad kan ook 'n ligting aanvraai van 'n maatskaplike werker om die kost se laermoeilikhede te bevestig.

Enige kind wat onder uiters-mismedige omstandighede lewe kan vrygestel word van skooltaak. Hoewel KwaZulu-Natal handel oor 'n weeskind, is daar baie ander kwesbare kinders in Namibië wat ly onder soortgelyke ekonomiese omstandighede en nie skooltoekoe nie betaal nie. Hulle behoort ook vrygestel te word.

Hierbenewens mag geen kind uit 'n skool gebors of teen godsdiensyster word op enige manier geradel nie of sy nie oer 'n skoolondersteunende bank nie. Appell kan by die streekkantoor van die Ministerie van Basiese Onderwyss, Sport en Kultuur ingedien word.

Vy informeer oor hoe om met 'n maatskaplike werker in omvalking te kom, kontak moeslielik die Ministerie van Gesondheid en Maatskaplike Dienste (Dirkotoraat Maatskaplike Dienste). Behelpige kinders mag ook wye gespreek word van die betroubaarheid van kostungsgelede. Vy informeer oor die uitloskorting of vermindering van kostungsgelede, kontak die Streeksoptuonbestuur, Ministerie van Basiese Onderwyss, Sport en Kultuur.

Vir meer info kan u ook in aanvalking kom met:
Catholic AIDS Action, Postbus 11525, Windhoek, Namibië.
Tel: 061-276 350 Fax: 061-276364.



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Kauna wakes up with a heavy heart. It is her birthday, but her birthday wish – to continue schooling – looks like it has no chance of coming true. Can something be done to help Namibian children like Kauna?

This book should be read by everyone who knows a child in need.

Kauna word wakker met 'n seer hart. Dit is haar verjaarsdag, maar haar verjaarsdagwens – om te kan aanhou skoolgaan – lyk nie asof dit vervul gaan word nie. Is daar iets wat vir kinders soos Kauna in Namibië gedoen kan word?

Hierdie boek behoort gelees te word deur elkeen wat 'n behoeftige kind ken.

